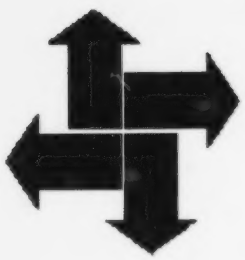
TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

1 April 2003 -
31 March 2004



ALBERTA COUNCIL ON ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFER

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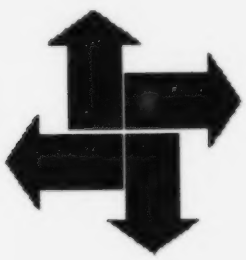

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11 June 2004

The Honourable Lyle Oberg
Minister of Learning
204 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

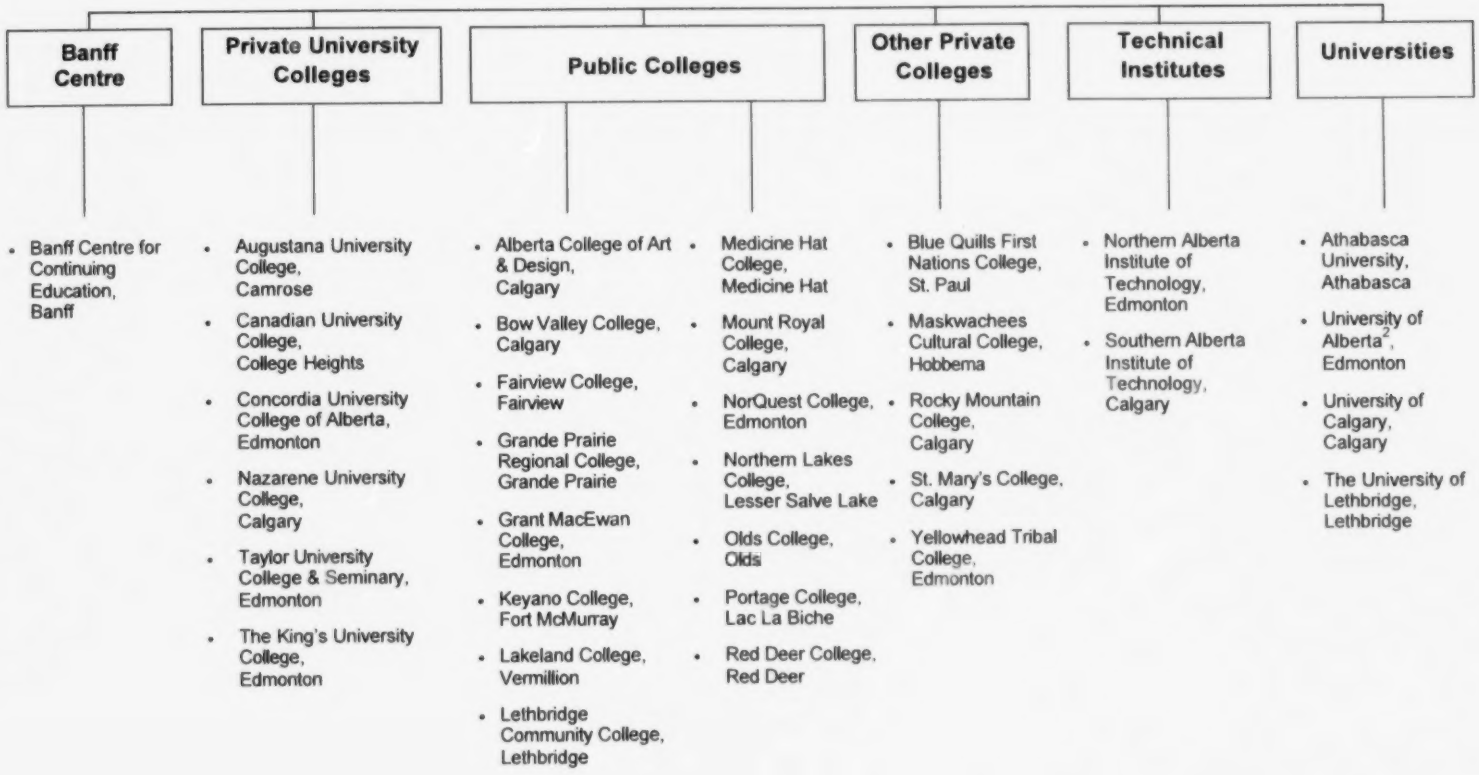
Dear Dr. Oberg:

On behalf of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer and in accordance with Council's terms of reference, I have the honour of providing you with the Twenty-ninth Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2004.

Sincerely,

Lucille R. Walter, BEd, DipEd
Chair

ALBERTA POST-SECONDARY TRANSFER SYSTEM[1]


Banff Centre
Banff Centre for Continuing Education, Banff
Private University Colleges
Augustana University College, Camrose
Canadian University College, College Heights
Concordia University College of Alberta, Edmonton
Nazarene University College, Calgary
Taylor University College & Seminary, Edmonton
The King's University College, Edmonton
Public Colleges
Alberta College of Art & Design, Calgary
Bow Valley College, Calgary
Fairview College, Fairview
Grande Prairie Regional College, Grande Prairie
Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton
Keyano College, Fort McMurray
Lakeland College, Vermillion
Lethbridge Community College, Lethbridge
Medicine Hat College, Medicine Hat
Mount Royal College, Calgary
NorQuest College, Edmonton
Northern Lakes College, Lesser Salve Lake
Olds College, Olds
Portage College, Lac La Biche
Red Deer College, Red Deer
Other Private Colleges
Blue Quills First Nations College, St. Paul
Maskwachees Cultural College, Hobbema
Rocky Mountain College, Calgary
St. Mary's College, Calgary
Yellowhead Tribal College, Edmonton
Technical Institutes
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Edmonton
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Calgary
Universities
Athabasca University, Athabasca
University of Alberta[2], Edmonton
University of Calgary, Calgary
The University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge

[1] This chart contains public institutions and those with transfer agreements in Section III of the *Transfer Guide*. In addition, the *Guide* includes transfer agreements with Aurora College and Nunavut Arctic College in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, Nechi Institute on Alcohol and Drug Education, and Transport Canada. There are other organizations, private and non-affiliated colleges and private vocational schools in Alberta, some of which may offer courses that are transferable.

[2] University of Alberta has a formal affiliation agreement with North American Baptist College, Edmonton under which certain courses offered by the College will be accepted by the University for transfer credit. St. Joseph's College and St. Stephen's College are affiliated with the University of Alberta and are located on the University's campus.

Source: 2003-2004 Alberta Transfer Guide

106-02225/

INTRODUCTION

Student transfer involves the portability of educational credit among post-secondary institutions. Based on successful completion of studies at an Alberta post-secondary institution, students receive transfer credit, where appropriate, upon admission to an educational program in another Alberta post-secondary institution. The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) serves as a body through which Alberta's post-secondary institutions work in a co-operative manner to ensure effective transferability. Basic to the work of Council is the principle that a student should not be required to repeat previous learning experiences in which competence has been demonstrated, nor be granted more transfer credit than previous learning experiences would warrant for successful completion of the program.

Established in 1974 at the request of post-secondary institutions, Council operates with the support of the Minister of Learning and the co-operation of Alberta's post-secondary institutions. The 15-member Council includes the Chair and representatives from the public, students, universities, public colleges and technical institutes, private university colleges, and a secondary system member from Alberta Learning. Council reports annually to the Minister of Learning. The services of the Executive Officer and other Secretariat staff are provided by Alberta Learning in the fulfillment of Council's responsibilities. Council membership, its Terms of Reference, its Principles, Policies and Procedures, the Alberta Transfer Model, and a list of current publications are recorded in the appendices.

Post-secondary institutions have statutory responsibility for admission and transfer decisions. Those that are part of the Alberta transfer system are committed to Council's Principles, Policies, and Procedures while retaining full responsibility to develop and implement their admission and transfer policies. As part of its leadership role, Council encourages them to co-operate for the benefit of students. While actively involved with transfer credit issues, Council is also interested in admission policies from a system-wide perspective. These policies not only affect the ability of students to transfer credit, but provide the key linkage between the secondary and post-secondary systems.

Council's Principles, Policies and Procedures act as a framework to facilitate transfer agreements among institutions. Council encourages the maintenance of sound transfer agreements in a changing environment. Where appropriate, it encourages negotiations for programs and courses not presently covered by transfer agreements. These negotiated transfer agreements, together with institutional admission policies respecting transfer students, are compiled and published by Council in its annual *Alberta Transfer Guide* and made available on the Internet through the Online Alberta Transfer Guide.

To facilitate communication with and between institutions, Council has established a network of institutional representatives called "Contact Persons". Presently this network of Contact Persons includes a representative from each of 37 post-secondary institutions. In accordance with its terms of reference, the ACAT Secretariat is actively engaged in the day-to-day work of ensuring that institutional admission policies and transfer agreements are in accordance with Council's Principles, Policies, and Procedures. Where difficulties arise, it provides consultation and mediation to ameliorate or resolve concerns. In addition, by identifying potential transfer agreements, Council serves as a catalyst to bring about improvement.

COUNCIL'S MANDATE, MISSION, VISION AND GOALS

Mandate

The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) serves as an independent body through which stakeholders work co-operatively for the benefit of learners to ensure smooth secondary to post-secondary transition and effective transferability of courses or programs for students.

ACAT provides leadership to Alberta's post-secondary transfer system to achieve:

- increased educational opportunities for adult learners through student transfer; and
- accurate information for learners about admission and transfer opportunities.

ACAT operates with the support of the Minister of Learning and the co-operation of Alberta's post-secondary institutions. Student transfer involves the portability of educational credit among programs. Based on successful completion of studies, students receive transfer credit, where appropriate, upon admission to an educational program in an Alberta post-secondary institution.

Vision

ACAT learners access post-secondary education through a nationally and internationally recognized admissions and transfer system.

Mission

The mission of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer is to be a catalyst for necessary change and an advocate for learners in the areas of admission and transfer to educational programs.

ACAT provides leadership and direction in the improvement and enlargement of educational opportunities for Alberta learners through inter-institutional transfer. This requires a commitment to improving communication among and between Alberta's post-secondary institutions, as well as stakeholders in the trades and secondary system, and to promoting the advantages of a system of education, with all that means for educational planning for the benefit of learners.

To carry out its mission, ACAT:

- identifies issues and explores resolutions to these issues with stakeholders,
- advocates for learners at both a general level through its Principles and a specific level through interaction of ACAT's staff with learners,
- communicates with stakeholders and encourages communication among stakeholders on matters regarding admissions and transfer, and

- provides a forum for discussion of issues arising out of environmental change and trends related to post-secondary education.

ACAT is a leader in ensuring that learners have access to a highly effective and efficient transfer system. ACAT inspires partner institutions to guarantee that prior learning of prospective students is appropriately recognized upon admission.

All individuals and groups, who provide or benefit from opportunities to learn, share responsibility for realizing the vision for student transfer in Alberta.

ACAT is guided by its Principles and pre-eminently by principle (a), which states that student access to higher education and the opportunity for student mobility among post-secondary institutions in Alberta shall be optimized. Barriers to student mobility shall be minimized. The integrity of educational programs and certification must, however, be maintained. A student should not be required to repeat previous learning experiences in which competence has been demonstrated nor should more transfer credit be granted than previous learning experiences would warrant for successful completion of the program.

Goals

ACAT has four goals that are necessary to realize its mandate:

Admission
Learners will be admitted to programs on the basis of the relevance and quality of their total educational experiences.

Transfer
Learners will receive appropriate educational credit when they transfer from one Alberta program to another.

Communication
Learners will have access to current, accurate information on admission requirements and transfer policies as well as course and program transfer opportunities.

Education and Advocacy
As ACAT advocates for best practices on admissions and transfer in Alberta, stakeholders will be informed about its benefits. As other jurisdictions begin to establish their own admissions and transfer systems, the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer will serve as a model and will provide encouragement and advice on best practices.

ALBERTA TRANSFER GUIDE – 28th Edition

In May 2003 the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer published the 28th annual edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide*. The first *Transfer Guide*, published for the 1976-77 academic year, was the first provincial transfer guide in Canada. The first edition of the Guide reported 1,775 course and program agreements involving 12 post-secondary institutions. In contrast, the 28th edition for the 2003-2004 academic year involved

29,208 transfer agreements (of which 633 were program agreements and the remainder course agreements) and 36 institutions in Alberta, Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

The *Alberta Transfer Guide* is a reflection of the extent to which Alberta's post-secondary institutions are co-operating to reduce and eliminate obstacles to transferability. Its publication and distribution each spring is a major responsibility of Council. Preparation of each edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* is a dynamic process as new transfer agreements are continually being negotiated and current agreements are reviewed, revised or deleted. The Executive Officer once again managed production of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* with the assistance of the institutional Contact Persons and the ACAT Secretariat. The twenty-eighth annual edition for the 2003-04 academic year was distributed extensively within Alberta to the registrar's office of all post-secondary institutions, student associations, high school principals and guidance counselors, Alberta Career Development Centres, and public libraries. It was also distributed to post-secondary institutions in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Post-secondary institutions and other organizations outside of these provinces received a letter informing them of the availability of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* online. In addition, the *Guide* was provided to students upon request who were unable to access the information online.

Keyano College, Lethbridge Community College and Mount Royal College requested and received camera-ready copy of their entries in the *Transfer Guide* along with other relevant sections to reprint and distribute widely to students. These colleges were commended for working with Council to provide students with relevant transfer information.

Because of the complexity of high school curriculum changes in Ontario, in particular, the Secretariat convened a teleconference with individuals from Alberta's universities and private university colleges in order to finalize the chart on "Other Provinces 2002-2003 Grade 12-level Subjects Acceptable for Admission to Alberta Universities and Private University Colleges".

Following Council's procedure for the review of transfer agreements, Contact Persons used the Contact Persons' Web site to create new transfer agreements, amend existing agreements and/or terminate obsolete entries, for the preparation for the production of the 2004-05 edition of the *Transfer Guide*. The Secretariat received information regarding these additions and changes in February 2004 for verification. This ensures the information in the *2004-05 Alberta Transfer Guide* will reflect courses and programs offered during the 2004-05 academic year.

Online Alberta Transfer Guide

The database of transfer agreements is updated weekly and is the most current information available. The public can access information on transfer agreements through the Internet via the Online Alberta Transfer Guide. Using pre-programmed queries, students and advisors can find out which courses are transferable and to which institutions. Information on transfer agreements effective from 1993-94 to the present is available. Also on the site are admissions and transfer information for each post-secondary institution, including hyperlinks to their web sites and online help. Users can also download the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and the charts currently featured at the front of the *Transfer Guide*. These are posted in portable document format (PDF), which

allows users to read the charts using Acrobat Reader software for which there is no charge when downloaded from Adobe's Web site. There are a number of links to other related sites, including the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS), which add further value to this web site.

During the reporting period, the site had a monthly average of 181,088 successful hits. This is a 2.5% increase in usage since the previous reporting period.

The Web site address is www.acat.gov.ab.ca.

Contact Persons

Since 1976 Council has maintained a network of institutional representatives to facilitate communication with Council and among institutions. The work of these Contact Persons and their assistants is invaluable in relation to the production of the *Transfer Guide* and the collection of transfer patterns data, as well as in the day-to-day implementation of transfer agreements. The role and responsibilities of the Contact Persons are outlined in the *Handbook for Contact Persons*.

The Contact Persons' Web site is a password protected site where Contact Persons are able to initiate, review and authorize Transfer Credit Proposals and attach electronic supporting documents, typically course outlines. Once a transfer proposal is approved by the institutions involved, the agreement is verified by the ACAT Secretariat. It then becomes viewable by the public via the Online Alberta Transfer Guide. The system helps Contact Persons manage their transfer credit proposals as well as active transfer agreements; this can include amendments and/or revisions to active agreements. In addition, the site serves as an important communication tool for Contact Persons and the ACAT Secretariat. The site was used, on average, 347,381 times per month.

The annual meeting of the Committee of Contact Persons with the Chair and Executive Officer was hosted by the University of Alberta on 29 October 2003. Delegates from 32 post-secondary institutions participated in the meeting. As well, 23 assistants of Contact Persons also attended. The topics discussed included future directions of ACAT, best practices in transfer, monitoring how institutions follow ACAT's policies and procedures when considering a decision to accept or reject a course for transfer, and high school transitions. There was also a session where the revised user's manual for the Contact Persons' Web site was presented. Feedback from the Contact Persons indicates that the annual meeting is highly valued and very useful.

ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFER DEVELOPMENTS

ACAT Principles - Revised

ACAT last reviewed its principles, policies and procedures in 1993 on the recommendation of a subcommittee of ACAT. Given the need to review them again in relation to pan-Canadian principles of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) and the developments in post-secondary education locally and nationally since 1993, a new subcommittee was struck during the reporting year to review the principles and make recommendation to the full Council, with Matthew Glass, Lynne Mulder,

Gretchen Hess, Peter Haney and Jean Valgardson volunteering to serve.

Council reinforced its support of CMEC's principles, noting that although Alberta's principles are not identical, they reflect the spirit of the CMEC principles and suit Alberta's system.

With a few modifications, the recommendations of the subcommittee were adopted. The significant changes included:

- adding a new principle (f) to provide opportunity for students to obtain rationale for a transfer decision, and
- adding a statement following the principles to indicate that all institutional members of Alberta's transfer system endorse ACAT's principles and endeavour to apply them with respect to transfer within the province, regionally and nationally.

The amended principles were sent to presidents of post-secondary institutions, with a copy to the Vice-Presidents Academic and Contact Persons, advising of the revisions, and requesting that the revised principles be taken to the appropriate committees for information.

Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS)

The Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) is an Internet gateway to career, learning and employment information in Alberta. The Learning section of ALIS includes a link to the Online Alberta Transfer Guide. Council helped build awareness of ALIS by maintaining a reciprocal link from Council's Web site to ALIS and by including a notice on the inside cover of the *Transfer Guide*. ALIS, which is located at www.alis.gov.ab.ca, is made possible through financial and administrative support provided by the government of Alberta. The Secretariat's Manager of Operations is a member of the ALIS Advisory Committee.

Articulation - Post-Secondary to Post-Secondary

In 1991, Council adopted a policy of facilitating program transfer issue meetings. Where warranted, Council would bring together the coordinators of particular programs to identify transfer issues that relate to differences in course content as well as program requirements and admission issues, and to explore appropriate potential solutions. This is consistent with Council's role to foster better communication among institutions and thus to improve understanding and co-operation on all matters related to transfer.

Ongoing Program Articulation Initiatives

During the year, program articulation activity continued in three areas: academic upgrading, biological sciences, and engineering. The Executive Officer met with the Provincial Academic Upgrading Coordinators committee on 9 May 2003, 3 October 2003 and 6 February 2004 to update the Academic Upgrading Courses chart for publication in the 2004-05 *Transfer Guide*. At these meetings updates on curriculum development and changes were provided to the Coordinators by program developers of Alberta Learning. As well, work continued on refining the process whereby courses are reviewed for inclusion in the chart.

The primary topic of discussion at the Engineering program articulation meeting held on 8 December 2003 was curriculum/program changes and admission plans. Program developers from Alberta Learning presented proposed changes to the high school sciences curriculums for feedback. Following the meeting, the Executive Officer worked with committee members and Contact Persons to ensure accurate student advising charts were published in the next edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and posted on the Council's Web site.

At the request of one institution, Council explored the possibility of establishing a computers/computing science articulation committee. After polling Contact Persons, Council concluded that there was insufficient reason or interest in doing so at this time.

Articulation – Secondary to Post-Secondary

In this reporting period, Council continued to emphasize the admissions side of its mandate to ensure that students are able to make smooth transitions from high school to post-secondary programs. Council agreed to apply to admissions the kinds of processes and strategies that it has successfully developed with respect to transfer of courses and programs at the post-secondary level.

As in the previous reporting year, Council facilitated discussion of these changes with post-secondary institutions. During the reporting year, the English Language Arts articulation process was successfully completed. An acknowledgement and appreciation letter was received from Maria David-Evans, Deputy Minister of Alberta Learning.

Social Studies

Changes to the social studies curriculum are considered to be major. The new Social Studies Program of Studies for grade 12 is expected to be implemented provincially in 2008.

The first meeting of the secondary to post-secondary Social Studies Articulation Committee was held on 10 April. In mid August, the Chair and Executive Officer met with Alberta Learning's Social Studies program manager to receive an update on development of the new curriculum. Consultations with stakeholders on the high school curriculum began in mid October, and the articulation committee members were invited to attend any consultation they chose. The committee met to review a rough draft of the grade 12 curriculum in December 2003. A report containing the Committee's recommendations is expected to be ready for sending to post-secondary institutions in early 2005, a full year before implementation at the grade 10 level.

Science

The high school science curriculums are scheduled to be revised over the next several years. The current implementation schedule calls for new science programs to be implemented at the grade 12 level in 2007. Minor adjustments are planned for grade 11-12 biology, chemistry, physics and science courses. At its June meeting, Council members agreed that an ACAT Secondary to Post-secondary Science Articulation Committee be struck.

The first meeting of the Science Articulation Committee was held on 17 December 2003, hosted by Alberta Learning. Several post-secondary representatives were in attendance. The committee had an opportunity to receive information regarding the curriculum timelines, consultations, and change rationale; learn about the structure, philosophy and program goals; see an outline of the changes to the senior high science program; hear about the available learning and teaching resources; and hear about the provincial assessment.

Following the meeting, post-secondary committee members were asked to provide suggestions for curriculum change; recommendations with respect to admissibility to programs at their institutions; a list of skills that incoming post-secondary students need to have to succeed in the various science disciplines; and any recommendations with respect to the content of the final report. A final report will be drafted in the Spring of 2004.

In the future, Alberta Learning has plans to revise curriculum in other subject areas. Council has agreed to use ad-hoc subject-specific articulation committees when needed for secondary to post-secondary articulation.

Best Practices in Transfer Advisory Committee

ACAT has decided to strike a Best Practices in Transfer Advisory Committee. With the help of a consultant, the committee will produce a publication outlining best practices in Alberta's admission and transfer system with respect to such issues as negotiating agreements, communicating between institutions, and maintaining agreements. The publication will primarily be aimed at ACAT Contact Persons and other people involved in transfer at various levels within an institution. It will also be shared with other jurisdictions.

Communication

Through its Chair and Secretariat, Council communicates with post-secondary institutions, student organizations, other branches of Alberta Learning, and officials from jurisdictions outside the province. The Chair continued her emphasis on communication during this reporting period. To raise awareness of the Council and its work, the Chair visited a number of post-secondary institutions, and presented at the Leadership Conference of the Alberta College and Technical Institute Students' Executive Council, the College of Alberta School Superintendents conference, the Educational Liaison Association of Alberta conference, the "What's New for Counsellors" workshop, and to student leaders at an Alberta Learning sponsored "Post-Secondary Student Orientation". She also participated in the department's CABAC consultation and the Lifelong Learning Awareness Initiative meeting.

ACAT traditionally uses its quarterly meetings to visit institutions on a rotating schedule. During the reporting period, Council continued the practice of having the host institution give a presentation about their programs and offerings and raise any issues regarding transfer or admission that they face. This is proving to be an excellent vehicle for familiarizing members with the institutions around the province and for hearing first-hand what issues face admissions and transfer students and staff. This year ACAT visited The King's University College, Portage College and NAIT.

The ACAT Transfer poster, directed at counselors and students, was again distributed widely to teachers at annual Teacher's conventions throughout the province.

Communication with officials from post-secondary institutions, Alberta Learning and other federal and provincial agencies interested in education continued to be a focus of the Executive Officer and Secretariat as well. For example, the Manager of Operations and the Production Assistant presented at the annual ATA Guidance Counsellors workshop in November 2003. In support of ACAT's Communication Plan, the Executive Officer and Manager of Operations were involved with Alberta Learning's Raising Awareness of Planning for Post-secondary Studies initiative. The Executive Officer also had an opportunity in February 2004 to make a presentation on ACAT and Alberta's transfer system at a workshop in Toronto on quality assurance for degree programs.

ACAT Communications Plan

The ACAT Communications Plan is designed to increase awareness of Alberta's admissions and transfer system and the work of ACAT in the context of a well coordinated learning system, and to maintain Alberta as a national and international leader in this area.

During the reporting year, a contractor was retained to refine messages about ACAT and the transfer system, and design a new graphic treatment. Members saw draft artwork for a poster, bookmark, and web page. Once these materials were focus tested with students, they were created and displayed at Fall 2003 conferences, and were also presented to the Committee of Contact Persons meeting in October.

Other materials, such as an updated web site and brochure will be rolled out in other phases. Evaluation tools are also being considered. Council members were active in providing distribution ideas for the materials, recommended providing copies of bookmarks to Alberta Learning displays, and suggested banner ads and newsletter ads also be developed.

Duplicate Application Detection Project

The Duplicate Application Detection (DAD) project originated in 1992 and is coordinated by Council in conjunction with participating post-secondary institutions. The project has enabled the ACAT Secretariat to compare selected elements of new student application files from pairs of institutions to determine the extent of duplicate applications between institutions. The process is designed so that the identity of individual students is fully protected.

As well, with the consent of participating institutions and as part of Alberta Learning's accountability initiative, the DAD database was used to generate information for the key performance indicator information set regarding student transfer.

Last year, Council directed the ACAT Secretariat to survey DAD delegates about the feasibility of conducting the project on an as needed basis rather than annually. In March 2003, at the request of Council, the Executive Officer polled DAD delegates for their thoughts on the efficacy of conducting a Fall 2003 study. The majority of respondents indicated that the project should be conducted again in Fall 2003, given that

preliminary application behaviour was puzzling and many institutions were noting an increase in applications.

In Fall 2003, there were 28 institutions that participated in the project. The study was conducted, results were produced and returned to the participating institutions, and trends were identified. The results of the study indicated that the number of applications to the system increased only slightly although certain institutions experienced significant increases. Overall, the number of learners making applications decreased slightly while the multiple application rate increased slightly.

eCampusAlberta

eCampusAlberta (formerly eLearnAlberta, and known before that as the Alberta Online Learning Association) is a consortium of colleges and technical institutes that has been established to facilitate increased access to high quality online learning opportunities. The mandate of eCampusAlberta is to provide learner access to online courses and courseware, and offer seamless transferability for a student. To better inform members and Contact Persons about the initiative, presentations on eCampusAlberta were made at Council's June meeting and the Committee of Contact Persons meeting in October. At the request of eCampusAlberta, the Executive Officer participated in a meeting with registrars of member institutions and has had conversations with officials of eCampusAlberta in order to explore implications and resolutions to transfer issues. eCampusAlberta was launched with 40 courses on 1 October 2003.

New Members of the Transfer System

Becoming a member of Alberta's transfer system requires approval by ACAT. Sending institutions become members on the recommendation of a public post-secondary institution once transfer agreements have been finalized. Receiving institutions apply directly to ACAT.

DeVry Institute of Technology-Calgary

On the recommendation of the Private Colleges Accreditation Board (PCAB), DeVry Institute of Technology-Calgary was authorized by Order in Council in January 2001 to offer three baccalaureate degree programs: a Bachelor of Business Operations; a Bachelor of Technology in Computer Information Systems; and a Bachelor of Technology in Electronic Engineering Technology.

In a letter dated 28 April 2003, President John Ballheim requested that DeVry-Calgary be included in the *Alberta Transfer Guide* as a receiving institution. In support of its request, DeVry-Calgary provided evidence of student interest in transferring to its institution and its experience in granting transfer credit from other institutions. DeVry-Calgary has also indicated an interest in building bridges for its students to transfer to other Alberta institutions.

At its September 2003 meeting, ACAT approved the inclusion of DeVry Institute of Technology-Calgary as a receiving institution in the next edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide*. Subsequently, DeVry-Calgary reaffirmed its commitment to ACAT's Principles, Policies and Procedures and named an ACAT Contact Person.

Prairie Bible College
In a letter dated 9 June 2003, The University of Lethbridge recommended that its transfer agreements with Prairie Bible College be included in the *Alberta Transfer Guide* beginning with the 2004-2005 edition. At the meeting, ACAT agreed to the recommendation. At the request of ACAT, Prairie Bible College formally committed to the Principles, Policies and Procedures of ACAT and named its first ACAT Contact Person.

Pan-Canadian Initiatives

During the reporting year, ACAT, through its Executive Officer, was involved in several pan-Canadian initiatives.

CAETO
The Executive Officer served as a member of the Canadian Alliance of Education and Training Organizations (CAETO) advisory committee tasked with producing an Articulation User Guide. As well as being interviewed by the company contracted to draft the user guide, she provided recommendations of other knowledgeable people in Alberta who should also be interviewed. The Articulation User Guide is expected to be presented at regional focus groups in the spring and subsequently widely communicated throughout Canada.

CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer
ACAT's Executive Officer continued to represent Alberta on the Working Group on Credit Transfer under the auspices of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). She reported at ACAT meetings on the work undertaken to compare and assess the state of transfer in all provinces. A summary paper, "Provincial Post-secondary Systems and Arrangements for Credit Transfer" provides an overview of the post-secondary system in each province or territory and outlines current initiatives with respect to transfer. It is available on the CMEC Web site at www.cmec.ca/postsec/CreditTransfer.en.pdf.

During the reporting period, the group reviewed the status of the Pan-Canadian Protocol on Transfer of University Credits and recommended various research topics that could be undertaken at the provincial or territorial level, according to the needs of that jurisdiction.

In the previous reporting period, CMEC had adopted Principles on Credit Transfer in Canada. At the request of ACAT members, the Executive Officer undertook to ask Contact Persons for their comments on the CMEC principles. Subsequently, members decided to strike the subcommittee to review its principles (see the first item, "ACAT Principles – Revised" in this section).

Post-secondary Learning Act

Bill 43, the *Post-secondary Learning Act,* was proclaimed in March 2004. At several of the ACAT meetings during the reporting year, members expressed particular interest in

the Campus Alberta Quality Council, as the Chair of ACAT is expected to be a member of this Council.

At the March 2004 meeting, the Director of the Business Integration branch of Alberta Learning gave a presentation on Bill 43, and highlighted the important elements of the new Act. She also offered to provide a presentation to any post-secondary institution to clarify the impact of the new legislation on a particular post-secondary institution's business.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

As learning may occur in a variety of settings, Council recognizes that it is essential that adult learners receive appropriate recognition for prior demonstrated learning toward desired certificate, diploma or degree programs. Periodically, Council publishes an inventory of institutional PLAR policies. The last inventory, which was produced and distributed in March 2001 under the title, "Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition: Policies and Procedures at Selected Post-Secondary Institutions", contained policies of 15 post-secondary institutions. Council's *Principles and Standards for the Recognition of Prior Learning* are recorded in section G of Addendum C. Renewed Council activity in PLAR is anticipated in the coming year.

The Chair was a member of the National Advisory Committee for the Fifth National Forum on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, which was held in Winnipeg in October 2003. The Chair reported that in an effort to increase the national profile of ACAT, and recognize the relevance of PLAR to its work, ACAT contributed financially to this Forum. ACAT's sponsorship was acknowledged at the Forum. The Chair also nominated the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training system for an award.

For the conference and for a study on PLAR being conducted by CMEC, the Chair submitted a brief snapshot of PLAR information. In preparing the snapshot for the Conference, the Chair discovered that very little change has occurred since ACAT last compiled the document "Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition: Policies and Procedures at Selected Post-Secondary Institutions". As a result, ACAT decided at its June meeting to re-activate its Advisory Committee on PLAR. A small steering committee was formed to draft new terms of reference for the committee, with Fred Carnew agreeing to be the ACAT representative on the committee. The first meeting of the Advisory Committee took place on 17 November at Athabasca University, and resulted in a revised terms of reference for the reinstated committee. These were distributed to Council for discussion and feedback.

About 20 Alberta post-secondary institutions have provided their PLAR policies/guidelines to the Secretariat. Further work is being done by the Secretariat in order to hire a researcher to explore the status of PLAR in Alberta and to collect best practices.

Private Providers Policy

Recognizing that adult learners are served by a variety of providers, Council has a responsibility to students to facilitate course transfer agreements between private providers and post-secondary receiving institutions. Council's policy and procedures for

facilitating course transfer agreements between Alberta non-degree granting private providers and post-secondary receiving institutions are recorded in section F of Addendum C.

Institutions that request service under this policy work with the ACAT Secretariat to produce a fact sheet. The fact sheet presents, in standard format, information about private institutions that public institutions can request. There are currently 16 private providers fact sheets available to post-secondary institutions via the Contact Persons' Web site.

Student Organizations

During the reporting period, communication links were maintained with student organizations through student members, Matthew Glass of the Alberta College and Technical Institute Student Executive Council (ACTISEC) and Shirley Barg of the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS). The Chair attended and made a presentation to the ACTISEC Leadership Conference in May 2003.

Transfer Infoline

Adult learners who are planning to start or return to post-secondary study and have questions about transfer can contact Council's Transfer Infoline for service. Students may access the service by e-mail through the *Online Alberta Transfer Guide* or by mail, fax, or toll-free telephone (the majority of questions are now by email). Posters publicizing the service were distributed along with the *Alberta Transfer Guide* to high school counselors, student associations, and post-secondary institutions. The brochure, "University Transfer: Advice for University Transfer Program Students", revised in June 2002, provides answers to frequently asked questions about transfer. The brochure can be downloaded from the *Online Alberta Transfer Guide* Web site at www.acat.gov.ab.ca. The most common questions from the Infoline are related to university to university transfer, university to college transfer, interprovincial transfer, and out-of-country students wishing to study in Canada. Students' questions are becoming more comprehensive and involved, and more questions are coming from the institutions themselves, often on behalf of students. Increasingly, international students are using the Infoline.

Transfer Patterns Study

Starting in Fall 1979 and continuing each year, Council has collected data from institutional Contact Persons for its study of transfer patterns. These data provide information regarding the volume of student transfer between and among post-secondary institutions in Alberta and from out-of-province post-secondary institutions. In September 1979, 3,092 students with prior post-secondary experience moved from one Alberta post-secondary institution to another. In comparison, in 2003, 9,827 students were admitted who had previously attended an Alberta post-secondary institution. An additional 4,071 students transferred from institutions in other jurisdictions. Grant MacEwan College sent the most transfer students and the University of Alberta received the highest number of transfer students.

BUSINESS PLAN GOALS AND RESULTS

Council's Business Plan, 2003 – 2006, identified strategies, actions, expected results and outcomes for achieving its four goals: admission, transfer, communication, and education and advocacy. Performance measures were identified for each goal along with the expected outcome. The following reports progress in achieving the goals.

***GOAL: Admission* - Learners will be admitted to programs on the basis of the relevance and quality of their total educational experiences.**

Performance Measure: Information regarding exit skills and competencies in high school social studies will be completed during 2003-2004.

Strategies: Promote smooth transitions as students move from high school to post-secondary programs.

Results: A Social Studies Articulation Committee was struck during 2003-2004, and the ACAT Secretariat facilitated meetings between post-secondary faculty and administrators and Alberta Learning staff in preparation of 30-level curriculum revisions to Social Studies.

The first meeting of the Committee was held on 10 April. Consultations with stakeholders on the high school curriculum began in mid October, and the committee met to review a rough draft of the grade 12 curriculum in December 2003. A report containing the Committee's recommendations is expected to be ready for sending to post-secondary institutions in early 2005, a full year before implementation at the grade 10 level.

Performance Measure: Academic upgrading courses are accepted for post-secondary programs in lieu of those offered in regular high school programs.

Strategies: Encourage appropriate recognition of academic upgrading courses for admission to post-secondary programs.

Results: Published charts showing acceptance of academic upgrading courses for admission to college or technical institute courses, and for university or private university college programs appeared in the 2003-2004 *Alberta Transfer Guide.*

Performance Measure: Academic upgrading courses are accepted for post-secondary programs in lieu of those offered in regular high school programs.

Strategies: Advocate for appropriate recognition of academic upgrading courses to fulfill high school diploma requirements.

Results: Needs continued effort.

Performance Measure: The DAD Report is published and electronic results are provided to participating institutions.

Strategies: Continue Duplicate Application Detection (DAD) project to identify trends.

Results: The ACAT Secretariat conducted the Duplicate Application Detection Fall 2003 project, produced data for institutional as well as system planning purposes, and identified trends.

Year over year comparisons:

- The number of applications to the system increased only slightly (by 1,370) from 2002 to 2003.
- The proportion of total applications from out of province increased by 11% (3,283) while the proportion of duplicate applications from out of province decreased. Where learners in Ontario submitted 5,573 applications to Alberta institutions in 2002, they submitted 7,013 applications in 2003. Of those Ontario applications, 5,174 submitted only one application in 2002 compared to 6,109 in 2003.
- The number of learners who applied to the system decreased by 1.6% (1,911).
- The multiple application rate increased slightly (on average, students created 1.18 applications in the system, rather than 1.136 the previous year). However, the number of learners who submitted only one application increased.
- The number of learners who applied to the three residential universities increased by 14.4%.
- Fewer learners received at least one offer of admission (decrease of 6.1%). However, 75.8% of learners got at least one offer and of those, 82.5% attended.

GOAL: *Transfer* - Learners will receive appropriate educational credit when they transfer from one Alberta program to another.

Performance Measure: Annually publish the Transfer Patterns Study to provide information on trends in student transfer.

Strategies:

- Produce system-wide principles, policies, and procedures to facilitate the student transfer system.
- Monitor effectiveness of transfer system.

Results: Principles, policies and procedures reaffirmed as outlined in Addendum C of *Alberta Transfer Guide*.
Transfer Patterns Study, Fall 2003 completed and trends identified.

- 9,827 learners were admitted who had previously attended another Alberta post-secondary institution
- 4,953 learners with prior post-secondary experience were admitted to universities.
- Transfers to public colleges from other Alberta post-secondary institutions increased by 5.3%.
- Transfers to private colleges with accredited degree program from other Alberta post-secondary institutions increased by 48.5%
- From 1979 to 2003, a total of 97,183 students transferred to universities.
- From 1979 to 2003, a total of 48,267 students from seven public colleges with University Transfer programs transferred to universities.
- From 1979 to 2003, a total of 45,887 students transferred to public colleges.
- From 1979 to 2002, a total of 32,400 students transferred to technical institutes.

Performance Measure: *Alberta Transfer Guide* is published and the Online Alberta Transfer Guide is updated.

Strategies: Ensure continuing accuracy of transfer agreements.

Results: *2003-2004 Alberta Transfer Guide* was published

- Total number of transfer agreements was 29,208.
- Print run of *Guide* was 4,800 copies.
- Transfer agreements are searchable on the Online Transfer Guide at: www.gov.acat.ab.ca

Performance Measure: Transfer advising charts are accurate and published in a timely manner.

Strategies: Improve program articulation.

Results: Program articulation charts for Engineering and Biological Sciences were updated and included in the *Guide*.

Performance Measure: Annually provide evidence of the increased opportunities for student transfer by reporting on the number of course transfer agreements each year. Number of career laddering opportunities increases each year. Private Provider Fact Sheets are available to post-secondary institutions.

Strategies: Enlarge transfer opportunities.

Results: There were 28,575 course institutional transfer agreements and 633 program transfer agreements for a combined total of 29,208 transfer agreements published in Section 3 of the *2003-2004 Alberta Transfer Guide*. Sixteen Private Provider Fact Sheets are available on the Contact Persons Web site.

Strategies: Advocate for the development of effective institutional policies and procedures for assessment of prior learning as well as system-wide recognition of prior learning assessments.

Results: ACAT's Advisory Committee on PLAR was reinstated.

GOAL:
Communication:
Learners will have access to current, accurate information on admission and transfer policies as well as course and program transfer opportunities.

Performance Measure: Annually report participation in the student transfer system as shown by the number of institutions that negotiated transfer agreements for publication in the *Alberta Transfer Guide*. Annually provide evidence of procedures to assure accuracy of transfer information in the *Transfer Guide* and the Online Alberta Transfer Guide.

Strategies:

- Provide information to support students transferring to Alberta institutions so they can make informed decisions as they plan their studies.
- Provide information to support Alberta students transferring to other jurisdictions.
- Provide information to support admission of high school students from other provinces applying to Alberta post-secondary institutions.

Results: The *2003-2004 Alberta Transfer Guide* contained transfer agreements involving 36 post-secondary institutions.

The ACAT Secretariat continued to implement strict quality control procedures to ensure accuracy of transfer information in the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and the Online Alberta Transfer Guide. The information obtained from an evaluation of the Contact Persons' Web site assisted in the redevelopment of the Contact Persons' Web site User's Manual. Prior to the end of the February due date for 2004-05 *Transfer Guide* changes, a first draft of the 29th edition of the Guide was made available to Contact Persons via their Web site.

The Online Alberta Transfer Guide was publicized beyond the province to assist Alberta students in transferring to other jurisdictions.

Advising charts continue to be produced to support admission of high school students from other provinces applying to Alberta post-secondary institutions.

GOAL:
Education and Advocacy **– As ACAT advocates for best practices on admissions and transfer in Alberta, stakeholders will be informed about its benefits. As other jurisdictions begin to establish their own admissions and transfer systems, the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer will serve as a model and will provide encouragement and advice on best practices.**

Performance Measure Anecdotal evidence will show that Alberta learners, those who advise them, and other stakeholders will be more aware of the need for awareness of the transfer system as they do post-secondary and career planning.

Strategies: Educate students and other stakeholders about the benefits of being informed about the Alberta admissions and transfer system.

Results: The Chair or Secretariat made several presentations to students and parents including:

- a panel presentation with Chairs of the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board and Students Finance Board to the College of Alberta School Superintendents (24 April 2003);
- a presentation to the ACTISEC student leadership conference (9 May 2003);
- a presentation to the "What's New for Counsellors" workshop (14 May 2003);
- a presentation to student leaders from around the province at a 1- day conference titled "Post-Secondary Student Orientation" (25 June 2003);
- attendance with the Executive Officer at the department's CABAC consultation for post-secondary institution representatives, student groups and faculty groups (28 August 2003);
- presentation at ATA's Guidance Counsellors Conference (19-22 November 2003);
- presentation at Pan-Canadian Workshop on Quality Assurance (7-9 February 2004).
- attendance at the department's Lifelong Learning Awareness Initiative meeting (17 February 2004);

Strategies: Advocate for inter-provincial portability of student learning.

Results: The Executive Officer served as Alberta's representative on the CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer. On request, advice and consultation was provided to other jurisdictions, both nationally and internationally, on the development of an admissions and transfer system.

ADDENDUM A

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Student members typically serve for one year, reflecting their association with their student organizations. The following were members of Council during the reporting year.

Shirley Barg	University students (from August 2002)
Ed Behnke	Public colleges member (from August 2002)
Fred Carnew	Public member (from February 2003)
Catherine Eddy	Private university colleges member (from September 2001)
Matthew Glass	College and technical institutes students (from August 2002)
Peter Haney	Universities member (from September 2001)
Gretchen Hess	Universities member (from August 2002)
Judith Hughes	Universities member (from September 2001)
Vance MacNichol	Public member (from September 2002)
Rick Morrow	Secondary system member from Alberta Learning (through September 2003)
Lynne Mulder	Public colleges member (from August 2002)
Gord Nixon	Technical institutes member (from August 2002)
Raja Panwar	Secondary system member from Alberta Learning (from September 2003)
Peggy Patterson	Universities member (from February 2004)
Kevin Paul	Universities member (through December 2003)
Jean Valgardson	Public colleges member (from February 2001)
Lucille Walter	Chair
Marilyn Patton	Executive Officer

ADDENDUM B

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The following Terms of Reference were adopted by Council motion on 14 February 1975:

1. The Council shall review current regulations, proposals and practices for admissions and transfer which have been generated by Alberta Learning and by institutions and subsystems for the purpose of identifying those guidelines and procedures applicable to all institutions within the system of advanced education.

2. The Council shall develop procedures by which admissions and transfer policies, guidelines and procedures are granted system-wide approval.

3. The Council shall compile, maintain and disseminate a registry of all existing admissions and transfer arrangements within the Alberta system of advanced education.

4. The Council shall monitor the effectiveness of admissions and transfer policies and practices throughout the advanced education system; to this end it may carry out, or request institutions to carry out appropriate studies.

5. The Council shall recommend to Alberta Learning and to institutions revisions of policies, guidelines and procedures as it deems necessary.

6. Acting within the provisions of existing legislation, the Council shall, upon the written request of an institution, serve as mediator in resolving inter-institutional admission and transfer problems. (The Council will not deal with requests by individuals).

7. In the event that agreement cannot be reached through mediation, the Council shall, upon written request by the institutions concerned, serve as arbitrator.

8. In fulfilling its arbitration role, the Council shall establish arbitration procedures, inform the institutions of these procedures, and inform the institutions of its decisions, which shall be final and binding.

9. The Council shall advise the Minister of any legislative changes which it deems necessary.

10. The Council, at the request of the Minister or institutions, shall comment on unresolved transfer problems related to proposed programs.

11. The Council shall report annually to the Minister of Learning on its activities.

12. The Council will operate with the support of: a) Council members, to be reimbursed by Alberta Learning for out-of-pocket expenses incurred; b) the Chair, to be paid an appropriate honorarium; and c) an executive secretary and such other necessary resources and services to be made available by Alberta Learning as required by the Council in the fulfillment of its responsibilities.

ADDENDUM C
COUNCIL PRINCIPLES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. CONTEXT

1. Role and Composition

The role of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer is to be a catalyst for change and an advocate for learners in the areas of post-secondary admission and transfer. To carry out its role Council provides leadership and direction in the improvement of educational opportunities for Alberta students through inter-institutional transfer. This requires a commitment to improving communication among Alberta post-secondary institutions, and thus to promote the advantages of a system of education, with all that this means for educational planning for the benefit of learners.

In the fulfillment of its role, Council is engaged in the following activities:

(a) leadership — including the development and formulation of policies and procedures whereby transfer credit for courses and programs may be negotiated.

(b) communication — Council is committed to improving communication on matters regarding admissions and transfer.

(c) publication — primarily the production and distribution of a yearly *Transfer Guide* listing all transfer credit arrangements for courses and programs within the Alberta post-secondary system, together with statements of relevant policies and procedures. The ACAT Secretariat also produces periodic New Transfer Agreements reports, a *Handbook for Contact Persons*, the yearly Transfer Patterns tables, and an *Annual Report*.

(d) mediation — as requested by institutions within the system, to resolve complaints or disputes concerning transfer arrangements and credits, and thus to ensure that the best interests of students are served.

(e) applied research — on matters related to the transfer of students throughout the system.

The 15 member Council which is appointed by the Minister of Learning is an independent body which reports annually to the Minister. Council membership includes the Chair, 2 members of the public, 2 student members, 4 members nominated by the Universities Co-ordinating Council, 4 members nominated by the Council of College and Technical Institute Presidents, 1 member nominated by the Private Colleges Co-ordinating Council, and 1 secondary system member from Alberta Learning. Professional support, including service of an Executive Officer, is supplied by Alberta Learning.

The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer usually meets 4 times a year, generally at institutions.

2. Overview of the Post-secondary System

The Council's activities are directed primarily towards the Alberta post-secondary system, which includes 4 universities, The Banff Centre, 15 public colleges, 2 institutes of technology, and 6 private university colleges, and other private colleges. There are, in addition, a number of private non-affiliated institutions, some of which may offer courses which have transfer potential. Although the Council's mandate is directed towards the Alberta post-secondary system, the Council is sensitive to student transferability involving institutions outside of the province. For this reason the *Alberta Transfer Guide* is distributed across Canada as well as the United States.

3. Types of Transfer

Within the system of post-secondary institutions, transfer of credit for courses or programs may occur among institutions within a sector (for example, between public colleges) or among institutions of different types (for example, from a vocational college to a college). Transfer arrangements published in the *Alberta Transfer Guide* include courses and programs transferable to universities and private university colleges and those transferable to colleges and technical institutes.

4. Definition of Terms

In dealing with matters relating to transfer, there are several commonly used terms which may require clarification. Some of the more important are:

Accessibility: the degree of openness of institutions to students seeking admission to their program. (See Principle "d".)

Advance credit: the award of credit in given courses or programs on the basis of formal and informal learning experiences including: 1) work experience, 2) maturity/life experience, 3) unstructured educational experiences such as self-study, 4) structured educational activity. (See Transfer credit.)

Affiliation: a formal agreement of association or co-operation between two institutions whereby some courses and programs offered by the sending institution are substantially the same as those offered by the receiving institution. Transfer credit is thereby awarded.

Receiving institution: an institution to which students transfer course or program credits acquired at another institution. (See Sending institution.)

Reciprocal bilateral transfer agreement: a transfer agreement that has been negotiated between two institutions whereby Institution A agrees to accept the course (or cluster of courses) taken at Institution B in lieu of its own course (or cluster of courses) and reciprocally, Institution B agrees to accept the course (or cluster of courses) taken at Institution A in lieu of its own course (or cluster of courses). Therefore, reciprocal bilateral agreements are always two-way agreements. (See Unidirectional bilateral transfer agreements.)

Selection criteria: categories of qualification, capabilities, or experience (academic or other) which provide the basis for screening and admission (or rejection) of students to programs.

Sending institution: an institution from which students may transfer course or program credits to programs at another institution. (See Receiving institution.)

Transfer: the mobility of students among post-secondary institutions on the basis of their having transfer credit. (See Transfer credit.)

Transfer courses: courses delivered by a sending institution as courses which correspond in description to courses of a particular institution.

Transfer credit: an advance credit awarded on the basis of successful completion of structured educational activities at a post-secondary institution. (See Advance credit.)

Transferable courses: courses developed by an institution to meet its own program objectives but which have transfer potential. Transfer may be negotiated either on the basis of equivalence or of relevance to programs or courses at another institution.

Unidirectional bilateral transfer agreement: a transfer agreement negotiated between a sending institution and a receiving institution which is primarily intended to be one-way. In practice, advance credit for courses involved in an agreement usually will be awarded at either institution, particularly when the agreement involves courses that are part of a university transfer program. However, in some cases credit will not be awarded in the opposite direction; for example, Institution A may agree to accept Institution B's cluster of transferable courses in lieu of one of its own courses and have the agreement entered in the *Transfer Guide*. However, it might not be appropriate for Institution B conversely to award transfer credits for the cluster of courses if a student with the one course from Institution A presented it for advanced credit assessment. (See Reciprocal bilateral transfer agreement.)

Virtual equivalence: See Principle "b".

B. PRINCIPLES

The Council endorses the following as basic to its purpose and activities:

(a) Student access to higher education and the opportunity for student mobility among institutions of higher education in Alberta shall be optimized.

Barriers to student mobility shall be minimized. The integrity of educational programs and certification must, however, be maintained. A student should not be required to repeat previous learning experiences in which competence has been demonstrated nor should more transfer credit be granted than previous learning experiences would warrant for successful completion of the program.

(b) Negotiation of opportunities for student mobility shall be based on the recognition that while learning experiences may differ in a variety of ways, their substance may be virtually equivalent in terms of content and rigour.

Insofar as possible, transfer arrangements should allow for maximum recognition of previous learning experiences. The concept of **virtual equivalence** is vital to such arrangements.

(c) Effective academic advising and career counselling and optimum mobility require that the student have prior knowledge of at least the minimum transfer credit which can be awarded.

The *Alberta Transfer Guide* indicates the minimum transfer credit which is available for prior post-secondary educational experience upon admission to a post-secondary institution. Additional transfer credit may be negotiable on an individual basis.

(d) Individual institutions have the primary responsibility for instructional programs, even though responsibility for higher education is shared among various constituents. The responsibility of institutions includes program design and delivery, determination of academic prerequisites and student admission

criteria, and certification of the academic achievement of students.

In respect of student access to institutions and programs, it is to be emphasized that factors in addition to academic prerequisites often are employed as admission criteria. That is, while possession of academic prerequisites makes an applicant eligible for admission, it does not **guarantee** admission to an ins titution or to a particular program.

(e) Institutions have the responsibility and the prerogative to investigate the total educational preparation of applicants seeking admission.

Such investigation is intended to determine admissibility and appropriate transfer credit, and to counsel applicants. The relevance and quality of the applicant's most recent educational experiences should be the basis for admissibility and for transfer decisions unless such consideration would unfairly disadvantage the applicant. Differences in earlier preparation should not adversely affect consideration of the applicant. (See Principle "b" re **virtual equivalence**.)

(f) Post-secondary institutions are committed to developing and maintaining clearly stated policies and procedures for consideration of transfer credit and to applying them in a consistent manner.

Students should be able to obtain an institution's rationale for a transfer decision, and institutions should have clear procedures for a student to obtain a review of a transfer decision. The clear and transparent nature of transfer of credit is reflected in the *Alberta Transfer Guide*.

(g) After students are granted admission to an institution under a transfer arrangement, they shall be granted the same rights and privileges as students who began their studies at the institution.

C. A POLICY FOR ADMISSION AND TRANSFER OF CREDIT AMONG ALBERTA POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

1. Admission

Admission to a course or program will be granted to any applicant who has fulfilled the admission requirements for such course or program as established by the receiving institution. Where selection procedures are involved in admission to a program, each applicant shall be treated on the same basis as any other person seeking admission to that program.

In the case of students transferring from public colleges and technical institutes to degree-granting institutions, in lieu of the general admission requirement listed above, admission will be granted to any applicant who, upon successful completion of at least a full year's study at the sending institution, is recommended in writing by that institution as having satisfied the **appropriate** matriculation requirements or their equivalent. This is referred to as the Letter of Recommendation admissions category.

2. Transfer of credits

Subject to the above requirements there shall be two major transfer arrangements:

(a) Transferable courses and programs:

These are developed by a sending institution to meet its own program and objectives, and bear its own numbers and descriptions. Transfer may be negotiated either on the basis of equivalence, or of relevance. The principle of **equivalence** refers to courses and programs of the sending institution which are identical or similar to those of the receiving institution. The principle of **relevance** refers to courses of the sending institution which are in the same areas or disciplines and at the levels of programs offered by the receiving institution, and are therefore appropriate for credit at the receiving institution.

Credits awarded in this category may involve special inter-institutional arrangements or individual assessment.

(b) Transfer courses and programs:

These are delivered by a sending institution as courses and programs which correspond in description to those of the receiving institution.

Among universities, transfer has normally been assessed on an individual basis by the receiving institution. Formally approved reciprocal transfer agreements are listed in Section IV of the *Alberta Transfer Guide*.

D. PROCEDURES FOR TRANSFER OF CREDIT AMONG ALBERTA POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

To facilitate the negotiation of transfer arrangements among post-secondary institutions, the Council has established the following set of procedures.

Objective

These procedures are designed to provide a mechanism for the negotiation of transfer and transferable courses and programs, and for their inclusion in the *Alberta Transfer Guide*.

Categories

Courses and programs proposed for transfer credit are of two main types, each of which involves a different relationship between the sending and receiving institution.

1. **Transferable Courses/Courses with Transfer Potential**

   In negotiations of transfer credit for transferable courses, the sending institution shall supply the receiving institution with the following information: (a) course description, title, grading practices, weighting and outline, (b) textbooks and other resource materials, (c) qualifications required for an instructor. Additional inform ation may be required at stated intervals for review purposes, or at the discretion of the receiving institutions.

2. **Transfer Courses/Courses in Transfer Programs**

   In negotiations of transfer credit for transfer courses, the sending institution shall supply the receiving institution with the following information: (a) course description, (b) textbooks and other resource materials, (c) qualifications required for an instructor.

Transfer credit is based on initial negotiations, when the course is first offered by the sending institution. Subsequent negotiations and concurrence of the receiving institution are required where, in the view of the receiving institution, course revisions by the sending institution are sufficiently substantial to affect the transfer credit which has been negotiated.

Procedures

1. Each institution shall identify a Contact Person (e.g., Registrar or Admissions Officer) who will be responsible for both internal and external distribution of formal transfer proposals and responses.

2. Each institution shall, through its Contact Person, maintain and provide on request from other institutions (a) a list of other important institutional contacts for the purpose of facilitating appropriate preliminary discussions, and (b) a description of the internal procedures followed in the institution for the development and/or evaluation of proposals for transfer arrangements.

3. It is expected that proposals for credit will be processed as expeditiously as possible and formalized by means of the Council's Transfer Credit Proposal Form. If the transfer proposal is acceptable, the receiving institution will inform the other institutions in the system accordingly. The transfer normally will be honoured within the sub-system of which the receiving institution is a constituent.

4. If the transfer proposal is not acceptable, the receiving institution shall supply in writing, to the sending institution, the reason for this decision.

5. In the event that agreement has not been reached pursuant to (3) and (4), an institution may submit to the Council a written request for mediation. Where, in its opinion, the Council determines that a dispute concerning transfer exists, the Council may mediate to resolve the dispute.

6. In the event that the agreement cannot be reached pursuant to (5), the institutions in dispute may agree to submit the dispute to Council for arbitration. The Council will then establish procedures for the resolution of the dispute, and issue its decision resolving the dispute. The arbitration decision of the Council shall be final and without appeal or review.

7. Transfer arrangements are to be regarded as relatively enduring bilateral agreements — to be altered, amended or deleted only after **mutual consultation**. Regular discussion of existing transfer arrangements should take place between sending and receiving institutions. Any institution planning program or course changes which could bear on existing transfer arrangements as recorded in the *Alberta Transfer Guide* shall, insofar as possible, inform those institutions which would be primarily affected — subject, where necessary, to renegotiation. In cases where renegotiation of a transfer agreement is requested by either a sending or receiving institution, the onus is on the institution requesting the change to provide the other institution with **sufficient notice** and lead-time to permit renegotiation before the next edition of the *Transfer Guide*.

8. Renegotiation of transfer arrangements is subject to the same guidelines as for the initial negotiations (i.e., 3-6).

9. When a new agreement has been negotiated, it replaces the old agreement in the next edition of the *Transfer Guide*.

E. INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Within the context of policies and procedures of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer, each

institution has particular requirements and practices for admission of students and the award of transfer credit. These institutional requirements are summarized in Section II of the annual *Alberta Transfer Guide*. Students who are planning to transfer are advised to refer to the appropriate institutional calendar and to consult with the Registrar's Office at the receiving institution.

F. PRIVATE PROVIDERS POLICY
A policy for facilitating course transfer agreements between Alberta non degree -granting private providers and post-secondary receiving institutions

Framework

The primary goal of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) is to provide leadership and direction in the improvement and enlargement of educational opportunities for Alberta's students through inter-institutional transfer.

To this end, Council has a continuing responsibility for facilitating improvement in communications and working relationships among institutions regarding the admission of transfer students and the award of transfer credit. Recognizing that adult learners are served by a variety of providers, not all of which receive operating grants from Alberta Learning, Council has developed the following policy and procedure to facilitate the commencement of negotiation between private providers of adult learning and post-secondary receiving institutions currently served by Council. The policy is intended to serve adult learners by improving transferability, where academically appropriate, between courses and programs of private providers of adult learning and post-secondary receiving institutions currently served by Council.

Students, post-secondary institutions, and the public will benefit from improved communication. By extending the coverage of Council's principles, policies and procedures, the needs of adult learners will be better served. The policy will help students by facilitating the transferability of courses among providers in Alberta's adult learning system.

Policy

Through its procedures, Council will facilitate communication among Alberta providers of adult learning, including those that do not receive operating grants from Alberta Learning, so that student access and the opportunity for student transfer among providers of adult learning in Alberta is optimized.

Procedure

The objective of the procedure is to facilitate student transfer from programs of private providers operating in Alberta. This procedure is non-mandatory and non-regulatory. The procedure enables the ACAT Secretariat to provide information in a standard format in order to assist receiving institutions currently served by Council to decide whether or not to enter into transfer negotiations with a private provider.

1. A private provider may contact the ACAT Secretariat if it wishes to negotiate transfer agreements with a post-secondary receiving institution presently entered in the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and have these agreements recorded in Council's registry of admission and transfer agreements.

2. The ACAT Secretariat then will provide the chief executive officer of the private provider with a copy of Council's Principles, Policies, and Procedures and request the private provider to formally commit itself to abide by them in its practices as both a receiver and sender of students. At the same time, a questionnaire will be sent to the private provider.

3. When the private provider has formally committed itself to abide by Council's Principles, Policies, and Procedures, and has provided a response to the questionnaire, the ACAT Secretariat will prepare a "Fact Sheet" on the private provider. A draft copy will be sent to the private provider for verification.

4. The ACAT Secretariat may seek further information as it sees fit and may request a meeting with officers of the private provider.

5. When the "Fact Sheet" is finalized, the ACAT Secretariat will make it available to potential receiving institutions at the request of the receiving institution. The "Fact Sheet" is intended to assist the potential receiving institution in determining whether it is appropriate to proceed with negotiations for course or program transfer.

6. When a receiving institution informs the ACAT Secretariat that it is prepared to consider course or program transfer credit proposals, the ACAT Secretariat may ask the private provider to name an official to whom and from whom communication on admission and transfer matters will be directed.

7. The ACAT Secretariat will then send the appropriate Council transfer credit proposal forms to the official at the private provider for use in formalizing transfer agreements.

8. If a receiving institution approves a transfer credit proposal from the private provider, it will follow Council's procedure and return the signed transfer

credit proposal form to the official at the private provider with the original to the ACAT Secretariat.

9. Under section 3 of its Terms of Reference, Council will include information on the transfer agreement in its registry of admissions and transfer arrangements.

G. PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Context

Adult learners may desire recognition of their prior learning for a variety of goals including employment, further education, occupational/professional certification, and personal satisfaction. To assist adult learners to further their education and in keeping with its Terms of Reference, Council encourages post-secondary institutions to develop prior learning assessments that are granted system-wide recognition. The award of transfer credit in given courses or programs may be based on formal or informal learning experiences including: (1) work experience, (2) maturity/life experience, (3) unstructured educational experiences such as *self-directed study (such as home schooling)*, and (4) structured educational activity. In Alberta, transfer agreements covering formal courses and programs are recorded in the *Alberta Transfer Guide*. By extending recognition of prior learning to include all four varieties of learning, service to adult learners will be improved. Recognized prior learning should be transferable among programs within and beyond the post-secondary institution when it is appropriate to do so.

Framework

Because learning may occur in a variety of national and international settings, it is essential that adult learners receive appropriate recognition for prior demonstrated learning toward desired certificate, diploma or undergraduate degree programs. Basic to the purpose and activity of the recognition of prior learning is Council's **principle (a)**:

> Student access to higher education and the opportunity for student mobility among institutions of higher education in Alberta shall be optimized.
>
> Barriers to student mobility shall be minimized. The integrity of educational programs and certification must, however, be maintained. **A student should not be required to repeat previous learning experiences in which competence has been demonstrated nor should more transfer credit be granted than previous learning experiences would warrant for successful completion of the program.**

Council encourages institutions to develop procedures for the assessment of demonstrated prior learning. In keeping with its terms of reference, Council also encourages the development of procedures by which the recognized prior learning then receives system-wide recognition consistent with the educational mandates of post-secondary institutions. Recognized prior learning should be portable.

Academic principles

1. Recognition of prior learning should be based on demonstrated learning.

2. Recognition should be appropriate to the course or program in which it is accepted.

3. Recognition of prior learning should be consistent with the achievement levels required by the post-secondary program in which it is accepted.

4. Recognition of prior learning should be for learning that has a balance, appropriate to the subject, between theory and practical application.

5. Assessment of prior learning by post-secondary institutions should be made by content specialists, with external advice as necessary.

Administrative standards

1. Official notation of the recognition of prior learning on post-secondary institution transcripts and student records should be consistent with the institution's policies and procedures relating to maintenance of student records.

2. Institutional policies and procedures applied to assessment should be fully disclosed.

3. All personnel involved in the assessment of prior learning should receive training for the functions they perform, and there should be provision for their continued professional development in areas related to recognition of prior learning.

4. Institutional recognition of prior learning policies and practices should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed. In keeping with its terms of reference, Council shall monitor the effectiveness of recognition of prior learning policies and practices within the Alberta post-secondary system.

ADDENDUM D

ALBERTA TRANSFER MODEL

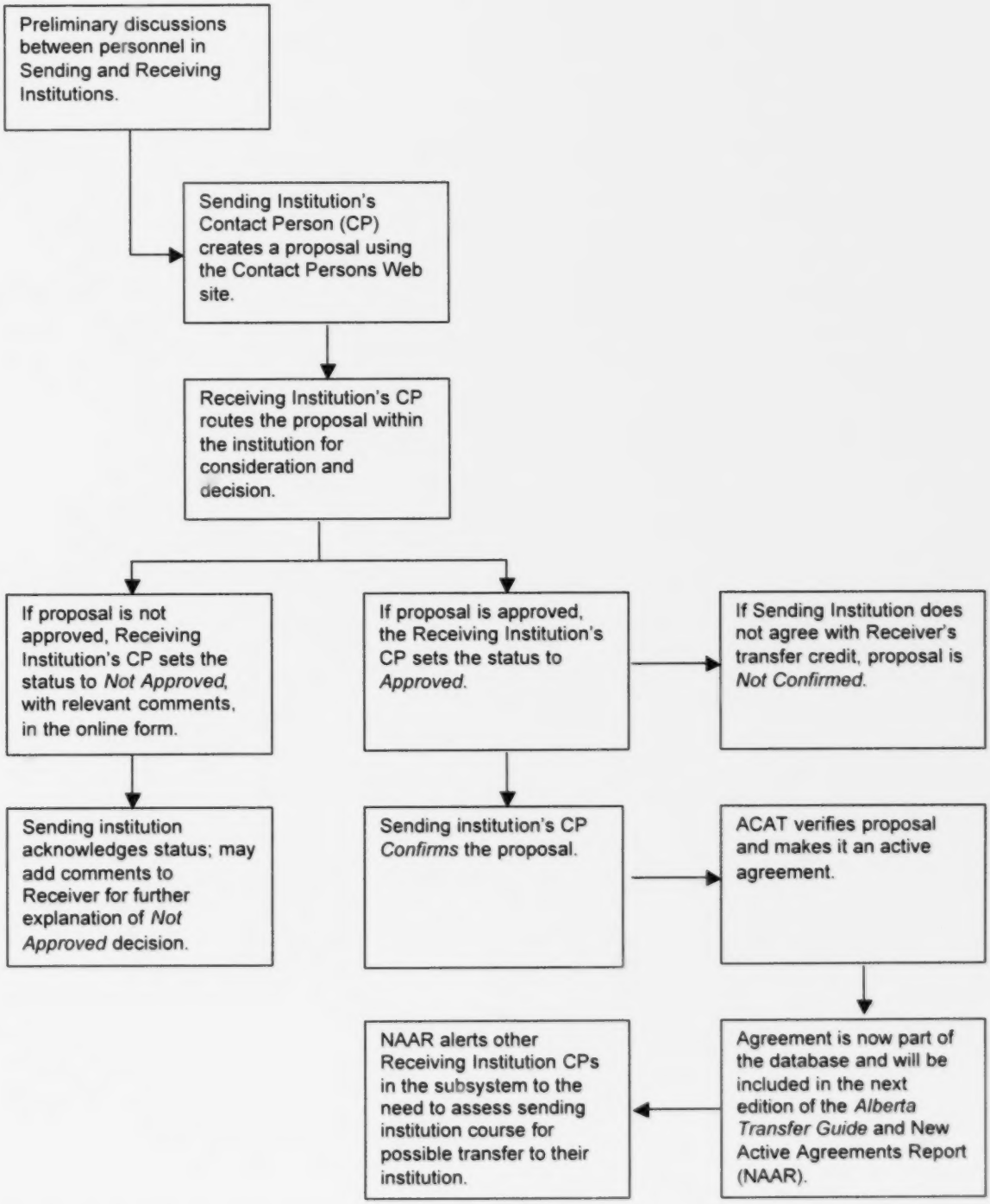
Since its inception, Council has evolved the following approach for organizing transfer agreements among Alberta institutions. Council's Principles, Policies and Procedures provide the framework for the negotiation of transfer agreements between institutions. When preliminary discussions between personnel in the sending and receiving institutions indicate that a transfer agreement for a particular course or program is desirable and feasible, the Contact Person's Web site is used by both institutions' Contact Persons to initiate and finalize formal transfer agreements. If the receiving institution approves the proposed agreement, it is recorded in the database for publication in the next edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and inclusion in the Online Alberta Transfer Guide. The accompanying chart illustrates the sequence of steps in this process.

Transfer agreements are regarded as relatively stable bilateral agreements. However, programs and their constituent courses undergo change, with revisions from time to time to such aspects as admission requirements, program requirements, and content. Council recommends that regular discussion of existing transfer agreements take place between sending and receiving institutions. Changes may require renegotiation of transfer agreements and resulting changes will be reflected in the database.

In accordance with its terms of reference, Council compiles, maintains and disseminates a registry of admission policies respecting transfer students and duly negotiated transfer agreements within the Alberta system of advanced education. Through direct consultation with both sending and receiving institutions, Council monitors the current accuracy of all transfer agreements which are included in the database and published in each edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide*. First published in 1976, the annual *Alberta Transfer Guide* has been established both within and outside Alberta as the official statement of transfer agreements, and is considered indispensable for transfer operations within the province. It is broadly used by jurisdictions elsewhere in support of Alberta students transferring there, and more generally as information about the kinds of transfer agreements developed in this province with the support of Council.

Alberta Transfer Model

Transfer Agreement Process


Preliminary discussions between personnel in Sending and Receiving Institutions.
Sending Institution's Contact Person (CP) creates a proposal using the Contact Persons Web site.
Receiving Institution's CP routes the proposal within the institution for consideration and decision.
If proposal is not approved, Receiving Institution's CP sets the status to *Not Approved*, with relevant comments, in the online form.
If proposal is approved, the Receiving Institution's CP sets the status to *Approved*.
If Sending Institution does not agree with Receiver's transfer credit, proposal is *Not Confirmed*.
Sending institution acknowledges status; may add comments to Receiver for further explanation of *Not Approved* decision.
Sending institution's CP *Confirms* the proposal.
ACAT verifies proposal and makes it an active agreement.
NAAR alerts other Receiving Institution CPs in the subsystem to the need to assess sending institution course for possible transfer to their institution.
Agreement is now part of the database and will be included in the next edition of the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and New Active Agreements Report (NAAR).

Source: Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

ADDENDUM E

LIST OF COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED OR AVAILABLE IN 2003-2004

2003-2004 Alberta Transfer Guide

Twenty-Eighth Annual Report, 2002-2003

Business Plan, 2003 - 2006

ACAT Activities Chart, revised March 2000

Duplicate Application Detection Project, Fall 2003
Reports and Summary Tables
Trends, 1997-2003

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition: Policies and Procedures at Selected Post-Secondary Institutions, March 2001

Recommended Practices for Officially Recording the Evaluation and Recognition of Prior Learning, March 1997

University Transfer: Advice for University Transfer Program Students, brochure (revised Mar 2003)

Transfer Patterns Study, Fall 2003 Report: Mobility Tables

Transfer Patterns Studies, 1979-2003, Extracts by Sector

Handbook for Contact Persons (revised September 2002)

Contact Persons' Web site Users Manual, October 2002